

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRASIL 01719 070319Z
ACTION SS-25

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O 062350Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6401
INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 1719

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY), BR, US
SUBJ: PRESIDENT'S TRIP: MEETING WITH CARDINAL ARNS

REF: A) BOUTON-JOHNSON TELECON MARCH 4; B) BRASILIA 1411

1. FOLLOWING ARE COMMENTS ON DEPARTMENTS QUERY RE ONE-ON-ONE MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND CARDINAL ARNS, E.G., AT MILITARY OR CIVILIAN SIDE OF RIO'S GALEAO AIRPORT. EMBASSY WILL ADDRESS DEPARTMENT'S QUERY REGARDING DESIRABILITY OF A JOING COMMUNIQUE IN A SUBSEQUENT MESSAGE.

2. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT ANY MEETING WITH ARNS SHOULD TAKE PLACE DURING THE "UNOFFICIAL" PART OF THE PRESIDENT'S VISITN I. E., IN RIO. WE HAVE ALREADY COMMUNICATED TO GOB DEPARTMENT'S ASSURANCES THAT A MEETING, IF THERE IS ONE, WILL NOT BE DISRUPTIVE OF PRESIDENT'S OFFICIAL SCHEDULE (STATE 55302).

3. WE DID NOT INCLUDE THE IDEA OF A ONE-ON-ONE MEETING IN RIO IN THE OPTIONS SUBMITTED IN BRASILIA 1411 BECAUSE WE BELIEVE
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THAT, EXCEPT IN THE CONTEXT OF OPTION A, SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE MORE TROUBLING TO THE GOB THAN THE OTHER RIO OPTIONS. THIS REACTION WOULD BE EXACERBATED BY THE MEDIA ATTENTION THE MEETING WOULD COMMAND.

4. SINCE WE WROTE BRASILIA 1411, ALL BUT THE FIRST SENTENCE OF THE PRESIDENT'S DECEMBER 28 LETTER TO ARNS (77 STATE

310916), AS WELL AS A PARAPHRASE OF THAT SENTENCE, HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN FOLHA DE SAO PAULO. THIS HAS HEIGHTENED THE IRRITATION FACTOR. A FRIEND OF CARDINAL ARNS CALLED ON CONGEN SAO PAULO TODAY (MARCH 6) TO APOLOGIZE ON THE CARDINAL'S BEHALF FOR ANY EMBARRASSMENT PUBLICATION OF THE LETTER MAY HAVE CAUSED BUT LEFT CARDINAL'S ROLE INT ITS PUBLICATION OBSCURE (SAO PAULO IS REPORTING SEPARATELY ON THIS CONVERSATION).

5. WITH REGARD TO A ONE-ON-ONE MEETING WITH ARNS, IF THAT IS WHAT WASHINGTON HAS OPTED FOR, WE BELIEVE THAT IT SHOULD TAKE PLACE OPENLY IN AN ENVIRONMENT OVER WHICH WE HAVE SOME CONTROL, I.E., THE PRESIDENTS HOTEL SUITE (AS SUGGESTED IN THE EVENT THE MEETING WERE TO BE HELD IN BRASILIA--OPTION C OF BRASILIA 1411).

6. WE BELIEVE AN AIRPORT MEETING TO BE IMPRACTICAL BECAUSE:

A. IT WOULD HAVE TO TAKE PLACE IN AN AREA OVER WHICH WE WOULD HAVE INSUFFICIENT SECURITY CONTROL MOST LIKELY IN A ROOM AT THE MILITARY SIDE OF THE AIRPORT, AND IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO, AND ALMOST CERTAINLY WOULD BE SUBJECT TO, ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE, A FACTOR WHICH MIGHT WELL INHIBIT THE CARDINAL;

B. THE FLIGHT THAT WOULD BRING ARNS TO RIO FROM SAO PAULO WOULD, IF IT WERE A SHUTTLE FLIGHT, LAND AT SANTOS DUMONT AIRPORT IN DOWNTOWN RIO, AND THE CARDINAL WOULD THEN HAVE TO BE DRIVEN TO THE MILITARY SIDE OF GALEAO AIRPORT 30-40 MINUTES AWAY THROUGH HEAVY TRAFFIC; IF THE CARDINAL WERE TO TAKE THE SAO PAULO-
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RIO PORTION OF A LONGER FLIGHT, E.G., RECIFE, THAT WOULD LAND AT GALEAO, CURRENT AIRLINE SCHEDULES INDICATE THAT HE COULD ARRIVE AT 0950, MARCH 31, IF THERE WERE TO BE A MEETING JUST BEFORE THE PRESIDENT'S DEPARTURE FROM RIO AT ABOUT 1030 AS PRESENTLY SCHEDULED. HOWEVER, IF THE MEETING WERE CONTEMPLATED FOR SHORTLY AFTER THE PRESIDENT'S ARRIVAL IN RIO ABOUT 1310, MARCH 30, THE CARDINAL WOULD HAVE TO TAKE A FLIGHT THAT WOULD ARRIVE AT GALEAO AT EITHER 1150 OR 1430;

C. A MEETING SCHEDULED FOR SHORTLY AFTER THE PRESIDENT'S ARRIVAL IN RIO WOULD ATTRACT ENORMOUS PRESS ATTENTION AND GREATLY COMPLICATE WELCOMING CEREMONIES, HOWEVER "INFORMAL" BY GOVERNOR AND MAYOR OF RIO STATE AND CITY, RESPECTIVELY, ESPECIALLY IF AS IS EXPECTED THE PRESIDENT ARRIVES ON THE MILITARY SIDE.

D. A MEETING SCHEDULED JUST BEFORE PRESIDENT'S DEPARTURE WOULD SIMILARLY COMPLICATE DEPARTURE CEREMONIES AND ALSO ATTRACT ENORMOUS PRESS ATTENTION:

E. CARDINAL ARNS MAY NOT IN ANY EVENT BE RECEPTIVE TO AN AIRPORT MEETING--MOST LIKELY ON THE MILITARY SIDE--AT EITHER END OF THE PRESIDENT'S RIO VISIT.

7. AS INDICATED IN BRASILIA 1588, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD SOUND

THE CARDINAL OUT ON THE SUBJECT BEFORE PROCEEDING FURTHER ON THIS ISSUE.

8. TO OUR PREVIOUS COMMENTS ON GOB REACTION TO A PRESIDENTIAL MEETING WITH ARNS, INCLUDING THOSE IN PARAS 3 AND 4 ABOVE, WE WOULD ADD THAT WE BELIEVE OFFICIAL REACTION, WHICH WILL BE NEGATIVE IN ANY EVENT, WILL BE ALL THE MORE SO TO THE EXTENT THAT WE APPEAR TO BE SEEKING A "CLANDESTINE" MEETING WITH ARNS.
JOHNSON

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